

So I would oppose this amendment and I ask my colleagues to oppose it also.

I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of my time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate immediately proceed to the consideration of the following Executive Calendar nominations:

Calendar No. 175, Robert F. Rider; Calendar No. 176, John D. Hawke, and Calendar No. 177, Linda Lee Robertson.

I further ask unanimous consent that the nominations be considered en bloc, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc, that any statements relating to the nominations appear at the appropriate place in the RECORD, that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and that the Senate then return to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations were considered and confirmed en bloc, as follows:

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

Robert F. Rider, of Delaware, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for the term expiring December 8, 2004. (Reappointment)

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

John D. Hawke, Jr., of New York, to be Under Secretary of the Treasury.

Linda Lee Robertson, of Oklahoma, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now return to legislative session.

THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPETITION AND DEREGULATION ACT

The Senate resumed with the consideration of the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 1278

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes to the Senator from Nebraska, Senator KERREY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, thank you.

As I indicated earlier, this amendment simply conforms with the underlying theme of S. 652 which is that if we have competition the consumers will benefit. The current language of the bill moves us in the direction of less competition. You cannot go from 25 percent ownership of stations in a service area to 35 percent without decreasing the competition. Inescapably the consequence is decreasing the number of broadcast owners in a particular area.

So, in addition to the localism argument, which was very eloquently made by both the Senator from Illinois and the Senator from North Carolina, the important issue when you are dealing with news—I point out a very important issue—when you are dealing with the question of how does the electorate, how does the public, how do the citizens themselves acquire information, is the issue of concentration of ownership. That is a very important issue.

So in addition to the idea that this shifts us away from local control of stations, there is also the very important idea of concentration in the industry, and lack of competition. It is highly likely that companies that we currently see as networks, or companies that we currently see as broadcasters, will be coming in at the local level saying we would like to provide what we previously regarded as dial tone and vice versa. This whole thing is going to get jumbled up in a hurry. As the Senator from South Dakota said several times, we allow people to get into each other's business. That is basically what the bill does.

So I hope Members who want competition, who want the consumers to benefit from that competition, will support the Dorgan amendment.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I will not use all of the remaining time. I am going to send a modification to the desk.

If I might have the attention of the Senator from South Dakota, who I think is now looking at the modification, the modification is purely technical in order to conform the amendment to the manner in which the underlying bill is drafted.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DORGAN. I have a right to modify the amendment without consent.

Mr. PRESSLER. We have a problem with one portion, which is to modify or remove such national or local ownership of radio and television broadcasting.

Mr. DORGAN. Radio has never been a part of the amendment that we offered today. It was not intended to be a part. I described the amendment earlier today as only affecting television stations. That is the intent of the amendment.

Mr. PRESSLER. In the amendment we have national or local ownership of radio and television broadcasting.

Mr. DORGAN. It is not the intent of the amendment to include radio. It is the intent to only include television, and that is the way I described it earlier today just after the noon hour.

Mr. PRESSLER. As I understand it, every Senator can modify his amendment at any time. That changes the amendment based on my understanding. The amendment I have in my hand reads radio and television broadcasting.

Mr. DORGAN addressed the Chair.

Mr. PRESSLER. A Senator has a right to modify his amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota needs to ask unanimous consent in order to modify his amendment.

Mr. PRESSLER. In view of the fact that the amendment I have in my hand is to modify or remove such national or local ownership of radio and television broadcasting, and just on the very moment of the vote to take out radio, and I want to consult with some of my colleagues, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COVERDELL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, my understanding of the parliamentary situation is that once all time is yielded back, under the unanimous-consent request, I would then be allowed to modify my amendment, which I sought to do. Is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It still would require unanimous consent to proceed under that scenario.

AMENDMENT NO. 1278, AS MODIFIED

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to modify my amendment, and I send the modification to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object.

I have 2 minutes remaining. In order to accommodate my friend from North Dakota, I would yield back the remainder of my time so that will put his request to modify in correct parliamentary procedure. Is that a correct assumption?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It will not be necessary for the Senator to yield back time in order for the unanimous-consent modification of the amendment.

Mr. BURNS. Then I reserve the remainder of my time.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request to modify the amendment? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 1278), as modified, is as follows:

Strike paragraph (1) of subsection (b) of Section (207) and insert in lieu thereof the following:

“(1) REVIEW AND MODIFICATION OF BROADCAST RULES.—The Commission shall:

“(A) modify or remove such national and local ownership rules only applying to television broadcasters as are necessary to ensure that broadcasters are able to compete fairly with other media providers while ensuring that the public receives information from a diversity of media sources and localism and service in the public interest is protected taking into consideration the economic dominance of providers in a market and